The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Life as a Trust from God.

"The true worth of a man is to be measured by the objects he pursues."—*M. Aurelius.*

"Must life be ever just escaped, which should
Have been enjoyed?—nay, might have been and would,—
Each purpose ordered right!"—*Browning.*

"Life loves no lookers on at his great game."
—*A. H. Clough.*

"My son, forsake thyself, and thou shalt find Me! Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and wherein shall I forsake myself? Always, yea, every hour; as well in small things as in great."
—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"Has not the soul an end which nothing else can fulfil?"—*Plato.*

"We needs must love the Highest when we see it."—*Tennyson.*

"Can you question that the soul instincts are allegiance?"—*Wordsworth.*

"Look not thou down, but up!
To uses of a cup," etc.—*Browning.*

The Passion-Hours of Life.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT A GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE.

We are to listen presently to *Gounod's* remarkable setting of that crisis in the history of Jesus known as the Passion. It is a panorama, the acts of a tragedy, almost too pathetic and sacred for the treatment of art, as if we could do nothing but keep silence before Gethsemane and the Cross. Yet it is a record which has so possessed the human mind and so moved the human heart, that man could not but attempt to express his feelings about it on canvas, in marble, and in song. Painters, sculptors, musicians, have been fascinated by the scenes of the Passion, and have striven, each in his own way, to give them some artistic representation. The Churches of Europe are filled with pictures of the Great Sufferer in the Garden and on Calvary. The masses of *Cherubini*, *Beethoven*, and *Schubert*; the Passion-music of *Bach*, *Haydn*, and *Handel*, and a host of others, testify to the attraction of this theme which men of genius have felt.

Now, I cannot but think that one reason for this concentration of artistic effort upon the Passion, one reason for this wide-spread desire to

give the awful scenes and emotions depicted in the Gospels some imaginative expression, arises from the note of universality in the sorrow of Christ. Christendom has sometimes spoken of it as altogether unique, as if nothing like it ever happened before or will ever happen again, as if it stood apart and alone from all that ordinary men and women can know and experience in this mortal pilgrimage. Very likely the musicians and painters, if they had been questioned, would have acquiesced in that view of the case. Yet I am convinced that what drew them to the representation of the Passion was not its uniqueness and isolation at all, but that it struck a note which echoes in all human hearts,—in some strong, in others feeble and faint, but absent from none, the tragical note which makes life grave, sincere, strenuous, sad, glorious. The Passion is only unique in that it is the highest instance of a universal experience. Every true life has its passion-hour, its Gethsemane, its time of trial, its inward crisis. Christ is the first-born among many sufferers. He had no experience which is not common in some degree to the saints of all ages. He suffered not that we might be delivered from suffering, but that we might suffer with him and in his spirit. He bore the Cross, not that we might never bear it, but that we might learn how to bear it. An Apostle prays that he may know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. The disciples are commanded to take the Cross and share the burden which the Master bears in bringing the world along the upward path. The Passion of Christ is a picture and a parable of what humanity must pass through on its way to perfection. It is a picture and parable of the crisis which, sooner or later, comes in every human heart and experience. It is this universal note which men have felt in the Passion of Christ, and which has moved them to clothe it in forms of art. It is human sorrow, human trial, human pain, human compassion, human fidelity, which is there depicted.

Life has its ordinary trials which come to us all day by day, little temptations, small cares, homœopathic burdens, petty vexations, commonplace duties, pigmy troubles, minute and unnoticed opportunities for love, kindness and patience. These daily recurring pin-point things make up the common stuff of life. But once and again life has also its passion-hours, times of overwhelming sorrow and heart-breaking griefs, its crises of pain, patience, and temper, when the fountains of the great deep are broken up, and the soul prays in agony that, if possible, this cup may pass away. There are days when all the landscape is darkened by black thunder clouds, when a heavy strain is put upon faith and hope, when life seems to be suddenly robbed of all its sunshine, and there is nothing before us but a great darkness.

Now I want to impress upon you the thought that how we carry ourselves in the great crises of human experience almost entirely depends on how we have carried ourselves in the small trials, the trivial vexations, the petty cares, troubles and temptations of ordinary life. What we are when some great call comes upon us for shewing patience, faith, nobility, heroic temper and a great spirit, will depend on what we have been in the molecular, microscopic affairs of life. No man can rise in a moment and without a previous training to heroic heights; he must, by a long experience, have been schooling and drilling himself for that hour of destiny. No man can by the mere pressure of great sorrow shew a great spirit. He must have been acquiring greatness in the commonplace duties of every-day life. Are you irritable and impatient under that heavy cross? It is because you have been irritable and impatient with the multitude of insect vexations that beset you on a thousand common days. Do you find when the hour comes for some great sacrifice of self, that men look to you in vain for a noble example? It is because you have not learned to sacrifice self in the countless ways that are offered by "the trivial round and common task." Do you break down when some great occasion presents itself to you for siding with truth and right? It is because you have not chosen the better part in the small opportunities which called for a brave temper. We are what we are in great crises in proportion to what we have been in quiet, commonplace times.

It was so with Jesus. That gracious bearing in the garden with the disciples who could not watch with him one hour; that prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies; that tender human concern for his mother; that compassion to the penitent thief; that fortitude of soul, that resignation of spirit, were all the results of a

great training. In the petty affairs and common experiences of his daily ministry he had shown the same temper he manifested on Calvary. He was great then because he had been great always. He did not fail in the passion-hour of life since he had been found faithful in all the smaller occasions of life's trial.

Consider, that whether we like it or not life presents itself to all noble souls as a trial. I do not ask why this is so? I have no time. I simply note the fact. From first to last man is found in scenes and circumstances of trial; tempted to do wrong and resisting, tempted to do wrong and failing. The question ever presents itself, how will the soul use its great prerogative of choice, what will it choose of the things and ways before it, how will it decide when ease and duty, the pleasures of the flesh and the call of the spirit are in conflict? Here is the supreme trial of life. What is all human life but this, man having to *choose*,—to choose under all kinds of circumstances and all kinds of feelings, under the stress and persuasion of all kinds of motives, —having to choose and choosing?

What is the chief interest of human story, whether in biography or in fiction, whether on the large scale of a nation's life, or in the smaller sphere of individual life, but this, how man bears himself under trial. Political history, economic history, the advance of civilisation, the conquests of science, the progress of arts and knowledge, all these are of great and undeniable interest; but there is a record and story of deeper interest still—the story which tells how men have played their part as moral beings, beings accountable to the high law of right and wrong which lifts them above everything else that they know of in the visible world; how under each new opportunity or emergency they have been faithful to truth, duty, God and humanity, or how they have betrayed them. Will a man play the part of a Judas or of a Christ? All great drama has its interest here. We watch Iphigenia, Job, Hamlet, Macbeth, to see how they will act under moral pressure, how they will choose in the great crises of life. These are large, simple, and primitive instances of human trial. Those of our own times imagined by art are more subtle and complex, yet quite as impressive, and in Faust, Pompilia and Peer Gynt; in Vanity Fair and the Newcomes; in Romola and Adam Bede, we are face to face with the same problems of universal interest—how will man carry himself when the great choice is offered him? This is why we read so eagerly our Tennyson and Browning. This is why the novelists have such a hold upon the public—that their books, in one form or another, lofty or debased, deal with the fascinating spectacle of human trial.

And they all shew that men will be in the great critical moments of life what they have been in the throng of their unnoticed moments. The drama, the poem, the novel culminates in some great scene where right and wrong, courage and cowardice, love and hate are in the balance. Is a man then weak, undecided, cowardly, false? You will find that all his past has been of the same temper. He has not been brave, true, and loyal in the daily affairs of life, and in the hour of trial he comes to shameful wreck. Or is a man equal to the occasion; does he rise in human dignity before our eyes; does he shew for our admiration a brave, patient, magnanimous spirit? It is only because in the little trials of many past years he has trained himself in greatness of soul. A great grief comes; a cross is laid upon you, sore and heavy. Are you peevish and complaining? It is because under the lesser crosses of life you have not learned quietness of spirit, trust in God, a cheerful hope. You thought that in such petty affairs it did not matter, and was of no consequence that you should then be wilful, angry, and impatient. The fit passed off in an hour. But it has left you all unprepared for the crisis.

Set then a great value on these familiar, customary experiences of life as the school in which the soul learns the temper and gathers the powers that will enable it in the passion-hours of life to be true, tender, gracious and heroic, even as Christ upon the Cross.

"Deem not that acts heroic wait on chance!
The man's whole life preludes the single deed
That shall decide if his inheritance
Be with the gifted few of the matchless breed,
Or with the unnoticed band that only sleep and feed."

JOSEPH WOOD.

The evil weeds in your neighbour's field will scatter seeds into your own.

In the Beginning.

AUGUST, year unknown; time, Six o'clock in the morning;
Sate in a tree an Ape; irrational; eating an apple,
Raw; no cook as yet, no house, no shred of a garment;
Soul, a blank; taste, nil; a thumb but slowly beginning;
Warranted wholly an Ape, a great Jack-ape o' the forest,
Jabbering, hairy, grim, arboreal wholly in habits.
So he sate on till Noon, when, hushed in slumber around him,
Everything lay dead; all save the murmuring insect,
Whose small voice still spake, proclaiming silence. Awaking
Suddenly then he rose, and thinking scorn of his fellows
Longed to be quit of them all, his Apess especially. She, dear,
Knew no dream, no vision; her Apelet, playing about her
All her thought, her care! At Four, he finally left her,
Went to live by himself, but felt a pang—'twas a conscience
Budding, in germ! yet went; then stopped to bathe in a fountain;
Wow! What an ugly phiz! He saw, and shuddered; a Ruskin
Stirred in his breast. Taste born! the seed of a mighty Ideal,
Raffaelesque, Titianic! Erect he strode through the jungle,
Cleaving his way with a stick;—Art's rise; An implement-maker,
Parent of Armstrong guns, steam-rams, et cætera! Still on
Plucking the fruits he went; felt pain, no matter the region;
Said it was not the apple, or crab, or cranberry, no! nor
Even the sloe. 'Twas a chill. He caught it there in the fountain,
Bathing, still in a heat, the water cold o' the coldest.
Glorious Ape!—Logician! not yet a perfect Induction,
But good step that way, as good as many among us!
So he went on till eve, when reached the edge o' the forest,
Just where the opening paths sloped westward; then i' the gloaming,
Mounting a rising knoll, he saw the sun in his glory
Set over flood and fell; and joining, as in embraces,
Earth to heaven draw near: he saw and suddenly trembled;
Sudden his Apehood shrank as a robe, and fell from off him;
Sudden a soul was born. He owned a greater above him,
Near him, round him, in him, far away in the splendour,
Having a right to rule, and he a duty to serve It.
And this happened at Eight—at Eight p.m. precisely—
On that August day; and if you cannot believe it,
Go to your Darwin; read how an Ape grew man; and a moment
Was when his soul was not, another, his soul was quickened.
And this must be true, or else—unhappy dilemma—
Men and monkeys both have souls, or flourish without them.
So farewell, Ape-man! Lo we, your progeny, greet you;
Thank you much for a soul, and—may we never forget it!

B.

Plain Talks in a Country Town about Unitarianism.

By REV. RUDOLF DAVIS, B.A.

I.—(CONTINUED).

"Where do you go on Sundays?" The answer was "to this chapel." "How can you go there; you are going to the wrong place altogether; you will go to hell if you go there." One would have thought that at this time of day there was no one left who held such an opinion as that, still less people of any education. One would have thought that by this time to see such people it would be necessary to go to the Natural History or Ethnographical Museum, to look in glass cases for rare specimens of an extinct species. But it is not so.

I have heard of a man who thought he had better keep away to be on the safe side. His argument was: "Some people say I shall go to hell if I go there; nobody says I shall go to hell if I don't go there; so I had better stay away, and it will be all right." Probably he was unique.

"You will go to hell if you go to the Unitarian chapel!" What does it mean? Hell is not my subject to-night. We will take it to mean this: That Unitarians will be condemned by God to eternal torment for having been Unitarians; or if not eternal torment, will be punished by God with unutterable woe for having been Unitarians.

Now what are Unitarians? They are men and women of the same flesh and blood, of the same human nature as those who hold this extraordinary belief; though that is a fact sometimes rather uncomfortable to realise. Unitarians have heart and mind as other men; the longings, the hopes, the fears, the aspiration, the trust, the joys, the sorrows that other men have; they do not admit that they are less intelligent than other men, or that their affections are less warm, or their faith less spiritual; to them, too, the world is a marvellous temple of the living God, the Father of mankind; to God they go with their thanksgiving, with their penitence, in their joy, in their grief; from God, going to him in prayer, asking they receive strength in weakness, courage in difficulty, consolation in bereavement; the consciousness of forgiveness when they go with full repentance; the peace that passeth

understanding in hours of greatest trust. Unitarians do their work in the world with the faithfulness, and, alas, also with the faithlessness of other men; they have not done less than other men to spread the Kingdom of God in men's hearts—the kingdom of righteousness and peace, and joy, as children of God; they have the same trials as other men, they do not face them more ignobly; they have the same temptations, and they do not fight them less strenuously; they fall into the same sin, and their misery is not less grievous; they bear the same crosses, and they do not bear them in a less Christ-like spirit; they journey to the same death, and they meet it with the same trust and hope. All the height and depth of human nature and human faith belong to Unitarians as to other men. And yet, —because Unitarians do not believe certain things that many others believe,—because Unitarians *cannot* believe these things, but, using all the faculties God has given them, reason, heart, conscience, at their best, and with all the faithfulness and earnestness and reverence they are capable of, are obliged to believe something very different, and rejoice and glory in this truth which they know to be a higher truth, because they can see through and behind and all round those other old beliefs—can trace their origin in this mistake and that mistake, and give, generally, the whole history of their growth—and yet, God shall terribly punish Unitarians for being Unitarians.

Now I should like to know what god it is these people worship. It is surely some cruel heathen deity, some Dagon, Baal, or Moloch. It cannot be "Our Father, who art in heaven."—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,"—it is not such a God they worship. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you," it is not such a God. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God," it is not this God they worship. No,—it must be a monster; whom they call god, I, did he exist, should call devil. Rather than worship such a being, I would a thousand, thousand times rather be an atheist,—or make my fellow-man my god and worship him, for in him there is much that is noble, beautiful,—I had almost said worshipful. But a god who would act as these people say is only to be abhorred. They may base their belief on this text or that text,—I do not care. Though every creed and every Church and every chapter of every Bible in the world declared this belief to be true, it would be no proof, it would make no difference. God is good; God is love. That we know each one of us individually from the experience of our own lives. In presence of that truth, all such horrors vanish.

Surely it ought to be too late for anyone in Christendom to believe that God could cause anyone to suffer for holding any opinion which he believes to be true, and holds earnestly and honestly. Those churches and those individuals who teach such profanity, such sacrilege as that God could punish infinitely any one of his creatures for believing what he does believe with the whole force of what is best in his nature,—these churches, these individuals are the cause of most of the unreality of religion to-day; they are the cause of the irreligion in our midst. Many men and women who know no choice between such teaching and irreligion, prefer atheism. They will have nothing to do with,—it would be degrading,—it is impossible to worship,—a God who will punish creatures he has made for arriving at beliefs they must arrive at, if they are to use the powers the Creator has given them honestly.

Surely, to believe such doctrine must make people supremely unhappy! But it either shows how unreal such brutal creeds are to those who hold them, or how they can twist and distort human nature, that those who hold and uphold these creeds are not essentially different from other men. They can go about their work as cheerfully as any. Have they no thought of the misery in store for millions and millions and millions of their fellowmen? Why, there are actually people who take to themselves the Christian name, and yet believe that only 144,000 people out of all the life of the world, past, present, and to come, are to be saved, and that, forsooth, because it says in the book of Revelation that no one could learn the new song but 144,000 which were the redeemed from the earth. That comes of following the letter. Truly the letter killeth; it is the Spirit that giveth life. And here the letter destroys the goodness, justice, morality of God. No matter. Perish virtue, rather than give up the literal

inspiration of the Bible wrongly understood. How *can* men believe such things and yet remain sane? Of course it is impossible for the human mind to really realise such a belief; but even to set to work to try to begin to realise it, must end, one would think, in madness. Why, there are fifty times as many people in and about London at this moment, to say nothing of all the other people in England. Supposing the 144,000 that are to be saved to be living in the world now, it would mean that of all people now alive on this earth only one out of every 10,000 would be saved; all the rest lost; 9999 out of every 10,000 people now alive, lost; all others, without exception, who have lived in the 1900 years since Christ, all lost; all the inhabitants of the world in the 100,000 years and more before Christ, all lost, all in hell, all in eternal torment.

And people glory in this their "religion," and praise their "God." It is wicked and blasphemous doctrine.

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

* * * * *

We make His love too narrow by false limits of our own.

To be continued.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

MAY.

The closing weeks of last term had no less than four red-letter days in store for us—Mr. Stopford Brooke's two sermons, Dr. Caird's paper at the Martineau Club, and the unveiling—presentation rather—of the Warrington window to our library.

The two sermons of Mr. Stopford Brooke filled our chapel to over-flowing with eager congregations. Some of those who listened to him had doubtless heard him deliver the University Sermon, twenty-four years ago, on "The changed Aspects of Christian Theology," an utterance ringing with the prophecy of a wider, freer, and more democratic theology than that which was then—and, alas! is still—dominant in the Church of England. His subsequent career affords an illuminating commentary on the text of that sermon, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." There was little in that sermon, we may suppose, which Mr. Brooke could not now repeat with increased power and conviction, still it is not without deep satisfaction and some pride that we see him no longer at St. Mary's, but at Manchester College Chapel.

It was indeed a delight and an inspiration to feel the charm of his personality. The romance and poetry of his Celtic nature passed into his speech. We all keenly regret that it was impossible to secure him as a constant influence in our college life. In the meantime, we must console ourselves by looking forward to the time, not far distant, we trust, when he will again occupy our pulpit to refresh our spirits, and throw his "flush of rose on peaks divine."

We deem ourselves highly fortunate in having secured the Master of Balliol for a paper before the Martineau Club. The Master's subject—a peculiarly fitting one—was "Christianity and the Historical Christ." The paper has since appeared *in toto* in the *New World* for March. Here are two short quotations inserted as signposts to the article itself. "The true attitude for thought which the modern Christian should adopt is to look upon his religion not simply as loyalty to a Master in whom was once for all revealed all that he seeks to attain, but as adherence to a living principle," &c. And again: "I regard Christian as the permanent adjective by which we must define the growing ideal of humanity."

An account of the ceremony on the occasion of the presentation of the Warrington window appeared in the *Inquirer* of March 20th. The work was executed by Messrs. Heaton, Butler, and Bayne, of London. The design is as follows:—At the top the arms of eight of the former presidents, &c. Below these two rows, eight in each row, of medallion portraits of founders, tutors, and students of the Warrington Academy. At the bottom eight allegorical figures representing Truth, Love, Literature, Science, Philosophy, Theology, Humility, and Freedom. The window is wholly in harmony with our already beautiful library and is an added glory.

The Mission still prospers. A species of labour agency has been established to find regular work especially for our elder lads. Dr. Drummond engaged Mr. Alfred Hall to assist in carrying on the work during the vacation instead of sending him to our mission fields in Manchester or London. The experiment was in every way a success.—At Professor Carpenter's Sunday "At Home" six papers were read and vigorously discussed on theological subjects. This term we are promised four papers by distinguished outsiders on social subjects, by Mrs. Bernard Bosanquet, on "Helping the weak," Mr. Graham Wallas, M.A., on "General ideas in politics," Mr. G. H. Grindrod, M.A., on "Educational opportunities of school managers," and Mr. Leonard Hobhouse, M.A., on "The ethics of collectivism." The "Stepping Stone" after long agony has, we believe, finally expired. It has, however, been of yeoman service to the 'prentice hand, and we bury it with tears. At our "Shakespeare" we read "Julius Cæsar" and "Merry Wives," after which we proceeded to jollity and giddy humanities. At our Debate we discussed the question of the organization of our Free Churches. We had a very successful musical service in the chapel at the close of term, when we rendered two anthems, one of them the composition of our organist. Most of us were at the Sheffield Conference. We collected £2 6s. 8d. for the *Daily Chronicle* "Fund for the Greek wounded."

In the Fields.

Airy budding ash-tree,
You have made a throne
And the sweetest thrush in all the world
Is sitting there alone ;
Drawn in tints of tender brown
Against a keen blue sky,
He sings up and he sings down—
Who can pass him by ?

Through the thin leaves thrilling
Goes each glittering note,
Till hearts of happy trees are drawn
Into this one bird-throat ;
And all the growing blooms of morn
(His music is so strong)
Are reached and blended and up-borne
And uttered into song.

Now he asks a question !
The answer who can guess,
While sparrows chirp a pettish "no,"
And doves keep murmuring "yes :"
"O will the months be kind and clear,
Unvexed by needless rain,
And will the summer last this year
Till springtime comes again ?"

Now he states a dogma—
His view of day and night,
Proclaiming volubly and loud
No other bird is right ;
But, half-way through his creed, he checks
At some sweet chance of sound,
And, catching it, no longer recks
If heaven or earth go round.

Now he labours gravely,
Each moment pays itself—
No singer ever worked more hard
For art or fame or pelf ;
And now he knows the pretty phrase
And scatters it like rain,
With quick "Da Capos" of self-praise,
Till the tree rings again.

He pleads, he laughs, he argues,
He shouts to sky and earth ;
The wild notes trip each other up
In ecstacies of mirth.
He drinks the azure of the air,
He tosses song about
Like a golden tangle of girl's hair
Spray-wet and shaken out.

O world ! when spring is shining
And dark winds stand aside,
Let men think of you as they may,
The birds are satisfied :
Their dauntless hymns of hope arise
With such a wealth of will ;
Though every year the summer dies,
They trust her promise still.

Airy budding ash-tree,
Try to show your power—
Make a leaf for each gay note
He makes in half-an-hour !
Wild flowers in the grass, be taught
The music of your parts—
Make a bud for each bright thought
He gives to passing hearts.

—M. B. Smedley.

Whitherward ?

VI.

In the paper which opened this discussion I understand Mr. Jacks to affirm that our Free Churches, if they are to maintain their right to the title of progressive, must never be content to rest in their present religious convictions, but must be continually asking what they are going to believe next. That, I think, is a mistake. Our freedom does not imply such a necessity of constant intellectual restlessness. It makes provision for the healthy growth of religious life and thought, saving us from the profession of what we do not feel to be true and the subjection of reason or conscience to any tyranny of dogma, but at the same time it allows us to rest with calm and abiding conviction in the great spiritual truths which have possessed our souls.

It is only when we become aware of some defect in the form of truth we hold, and therefore to that extent have ceased to believe, that we have to ask, What next ? Our right attitude in the Church is not of constant questioning and criticism, but of whole-hearted devotion to God, and the truth He makes clear, and the duty to which He calls us. Our object is practical, not speculative ; and it would be no reproach to a Free Church, if it should be found that one form of doctrine, or one method of thought, remained for a long period in general acceptance. All that need be asked is, that the prevailing attitude of mind and form of doctrine should represent the highest truth as yet attained, and then the duty of members would be in thankful and strenuous loyalty to that truth.

And if it be objected that such a Church would cease, for the time at least, to be progressive, I reply (supposing it to be our own Church), that so far as doctrine is concerned, that is a matter which we cannot determine for ourselves. We are servants, not masters of

Truth, and have to follow only where God leads. The progress with which we in the Church are directly concerned is not in speculative thought, but in moral and spiritual endeavour. We are gathered into a Church, because we acknowledge God, and desire to be strengthened in the true life with Him, to manifest the power of His truth and to work for His kingdom on earth. Our whole strength must be given to His service, in the light of truth which He has given, and in the freedom of the spirit which is the birthright of His children; then the life that is in us will naturally clothe itself in the right forms of thought, either continuing in joyful use of the old forms or changing to new forms, as the inward need is felt.

But now, passing from the abstract consideration of what is required of a progressive Church to the substantive part of Mr. Jacks's paper, it appears that although he refers only as an illustration of his general principle to the form of Theism taught by Dr. Martineau, the practical issue he wishes to put before us is, whether we are content to rest in this doctrinal position, and if not, what shall be the next step of progress? This Mr. Armstrong has rightly shown to be a question which concerns only those who are not content, who are conscious of some defect in the teaching and want a completer and truer form of expression for their religious life. And as a matter of fact, I suppose we must take this to be Mr. Jacks's position. He asks for a better answer on several vital points than he has found in the teaching of Dr. Martineau, and wishes the discussion to deal with these.

As regards his surprising contention that in the direction of philosophical Theism, as taught by Dr. Martineau, no further theological progress is intellectually possible without giving up something essential to religion, that to my mind has been sufficiently dealt with by Mr. Armstrong, and I will only add a further suggestion that Mr. Upton's very stimulating and helpful "Hibbert Lectures" furnish a striking proof of how, on the same lines of philosophical Theism, there may be a natural unfolding of fresh aspects of truth.

For my own part, I feel that a great wrong is done to Dr. Martineau's teaching when it is represented as having been merely a process of sloughing off one orthodox doctrine after another, which might be carried further, even to the denial of God. I take it to have been, on the contrary, a building up of vital truth based on the one true foundation, the facts of the spiritual nature of man. The result is that the living soul is brought face to face with God, the Fountain of all truth, with no limitations to progressive knowledge, but in all things surrendered to the Highest, and ready for any further light that may fall on the dark places of pain and sin and penitence, and any deeper insight that may be granted as to the life beyond death.

Mr. Jacks does not tell us explicitly what are the defects he feels to be inherent in Dr. Martineau's teaching on these great questions, and this is a service which, in the interest of a full consideration of the question, we may fairly ask of him before this series of papers is concluded. But, as the matter now stands, I see no reason to doubt that all the requirements of truth in the deepest and most sensitive spiritual life can be satisfied by the teaching of that doctrine of God and Man, the fundamental principles of which Dr. Martineau has made so clear to us.

Mr. Brooke, in his contribution to this discussion, says that the main question is, whether in our churches we mean to deny any more doctrines, and so place ourselves beyond the pale of Theism; and he asks for some general confession of faith in certain ideas as essential to religion, on the ground that without it we have no bond of union and no right to the name of a church. This is a very serious demand, especially as coming from one who left a creed-bound church for the sake of intellectual honesty and spiritual freedom; and in regard to it I would say that there is one confession, and one only, which ought to be required in our Free Churches, and that is the confession of God. The suggestion that in a church the untrammelled exercise of freedom might lead even to the denial of God, seems to me preposterous, and to imply a contradiction in terms. An earnest thinker may, of course, be led into ways where for a time he loses hold on God, and then he must cease in common honesty to be a professed minister of God, and, if he hold any, relinquish his office in the church. For this, as I have said, is the essential meaning of a church, that it is a gathering of those who

acknowledge God, and seek to be strengthened in the true life with Him. But beyond this we ought not to be bound, and cannot, so long as we maintain our fundamental principle of spiritual freedom. Mr. Brooke says we have no bond of union, but I reply, *God* is our bond of union, and those who truly live in the strength of that bond cannot "tend more and more to live in the pride of criticism." Their sufficiency is not of themselves, but from God. What we need is not a fresh statement of belief, to be made binding on all, but a fresh conviction that in the church we must be surrendered utterly to God, and He must be our only Teacher and ultimate Authority, — "the Truth teaching inwardly." And as to Christ and duty and immortality, and whatever else concerns our deeper life with Him, He will make clear to us what is true, as we are able to receive it. We must dare to trust in God and the enlightenment He gives to each humble heart, and, in the union of the church, declare to the world the strength and gladness of that living faith.

V. D. Davis.

VII.

The question, as stated by Mr. Jacks, asserts that we are the "Party of Progress," and seems to assume that we *must* move onward.

As long as there is uncertainty there will be unrest, but I think we need to guard ourselves against any impression that *movement* is necessarily progress, or that we must move merely to prove we are the "Party of Progress." *That* isn't our object. We don't want to move simply because we are expected to move. We move only when we see it is desirable or necessary to do so. To do otherwise would be, in Mr. Wood's phrase, "to land us in a swamp."

But I suggest that if it be impossible now to move forward, it is possible and it is desirable to so clear the ground as to be ready for a forward movement by and bye. It is possible to take stock of the present position, to compile an encyclopædia of ascertained knowledge, to measure the value of conclusions drawn—but for ever a further and fuller edition of that encyclopædia will be called for.

There is no finality—there is a resting-place—a junction, where you wait for the next train to take you to your destination, or at any rate to another junction further on.

Theologically we seem to have arrived at this terminus—(Mr. Jacks calls it a *cul-de-sac*—I do not)—and for the present we must be content to abide there, though we need not conclude it is the end of the journey. I see no necessity, as Mr. Jacks suggests, that we should go back. We wait for the next train to carry us onward. There is no reason why we should not explore the district while we wait; there is every reason why we should.

We may be working in a circle which leads inevitably back to our starting-point, but as long as we know there are things that we do not know finality is impossible, and the mind must be kept open for new truths whenever and howsoever they may come to us.

Belief is not knowledge; and, if I understand Mr. Armstrong rightly, I cannot agree with him that belief is final. Knowledge is. Belief, to me, seems to be an intellectual operation which suggests and implies a possibility of correction by knowledge. One cannot, of course, believe that a thing is true and also that it is untrue; but all human experience has been a process of correcting beliefs. The assertion as fact of what is only belief has been the bane of all established creeds—the curse of Christendom—and the fear to give up the unbelievable because it is not possible to at once substitute the knowable has been the weakness of all the theologies, and of mankind.

So far as religion is concerned it seems to me that Dr. Brooke Herford has simply, briefly, clearly summed up and unimperishably defined our position. In our conception of religion, it seems to me, we can go no further—in the application of that conception we have far to travel. It is surely our duty and benefit to try to see, accept, and apply truth, but also to expose, denounce, and destroy untruth, and herein lies our opportunity of avoiding the damning results of stagnation. It is not a full stop we have arrived at, but only a comma or a semicolon; not a position of satisfaction, but of expectancy.

Mr. Wood asks if we are always to go upon a process of negation. Absolutely, as long as there is anything untrue to negative, and I take it that a process of negation is a process towards

affirmation. It clears errors away, and makes room for truth. If our negative process does nothing else it will remove the obstructions which encumber the ground, and make progress, when progress is possible, more rapid and effective. The "Party of Progress" has arrived, as it thinks and believes, at the most advanced, the healthiest and truest position at present attainable, and can go no further. Is it not its unquestionable duty to try to bring up the rest of the human race to the altitude it has attained? It need not be so engrossed in doing this that it fails to keep an effective look-out for any new opening through which it may advance into the unknown district beyond its present position.

Moreover, has it not to put its advance position in order? To clear the roads to it, to make it perceptible to and attainable by the searchers and the wanderers? If denominational census-taking goes for anything the wanderers are more numerous than the organised armies. Why are they outside? Is it that our faith is not acceptable to them, or that we have failed to make it known and understood? It often requires courage to assert our Unitarianism—to stand for the truth we hold. Many do it boldly, some heroically, but as a body we are either too timid or too reticent. Our theological opponents, the expounders of superstition and untruth, are earnest, bold, and aggressive. They attack us on every side. If the untruths they hold—no doubt sincerely, if ignorantly—thus stimulate them, why should not our nobler faith, our truth, stimulate us even more so? Is it that we lack a full appreciation of and belief in our theological position? If it is even so, is it not still our duty to expose and destroy that we know to be wrong and untrue? Is not Unitarianism the mark of our theological emancipation?

The Unitarian position is one of comprehension not compression. It cannot formulate a totally acceptable creed which would contain more than one article, "I believe in one God." Creedal definition even of that would lead to difference. The conception of a Supreme Being, of one God, is the basis and the root of all religions—it is the attempt at definition which creates denomination, dogmatism, disagreement, danger, and damage. The glory of Unitarianism is that it makes allowance for individual differentiation. A man will not be saved by accepting what a Committee thinks, but by what he thinks, and especially by what he does as the result of his thinking. Most Unitarians might accept a creed which expressed a belief in God, Duty, Immortality, and in the teachings of Christ as broadly interpreted by them, but any attempt at a detailed and dogmatic definition of them—especially if acceptance of them were made a necessity of communion, of church membership—would be resented, and largely rejected. We do not want humanly created boundaries and shackles; they would contract. We want freedom, and an open vista.

Where does organised Unitarianism fail? I suggest that it is not sufficiently aggressive. That it does not fully and practically act up to its faith. A Unitarian Luther is called for. Abuses are not much less, though different, in our time than in his. I suppose most of us believe that Jesus was the supremest Teacher of the human race, that his example is the highest. But we cannot accept the superstitious notion that he was God. Yet in our attempts to idealize Christ, have we not been led to idolize him? In our forms of service, by our expressions in prayers, hymns, anthems, we continue to deify or semi-deify him, and so, instead of controverting, we have assisted in the continuance of a demoralising superstition which has been responsible for most of the persecutions and martyrdoms of the so-called Christian Nations; which is still responsible, even in this England of ours, for much that is civilly and religiously condemnable. We do not carry the expression of our faith to its natural, logical, and truthful conclusion.

And I come to this, that while it is not essential we should move at all till we see good reason for moving, and the direction we ought to travel; it is essential that the ground we occupy should be cleared, cultivated, and peopled. Our progress is impeded as much by the dark clouds around us, as by the darkness in front. We do not now seem able to penetrate the latter, but we can and we ought to scatter the former. It is the mission of Unitarianism to regenerate the faith, and through the faith the morals of the world. This is "Whitherward?"

G. Titterton.

Death and Sleep.

(After Krummacher.)

The angel of Sleep and the angel of Death were hovering over the earth in fraternal embrace. It was evening. They alighted upon a lofty mountain, not far from the dwellings of men. A melancholy stillness prevailed all around, and the last tinklings of the church bells were faintly heard in the distant hamlets. Peaceful and silent, as is their wont, the two brothers sat side by side, and soon Night stretched out her dark veil over the earth. Then the angel of Sleep rose from his moss-grown seat, and, in his flight over hill and city and stream, scattered abroad, with a light hand, those invisible grains that fall and sow slumber among mankind. The evening winds carried them to the peaceful house of the tired husbandman. Now refreshing sleep held in its embrace all the inmates of that cot on yonder hillside, from the hoary-headed grandfather, the hero of many a battle-field, to the babe in his cradle. The sick forgot their pain, the mourners their sorrow, the poor their misery. All eyes were closed.

Then, after his task was done, the angel of Sleep flew back to the lofty mountain, and lay by the side of his stern and sad-looking brother, and when the dawn appeared he exclaimed joyfully, "Now it is that men praise me, and call me their friend and benefactor. Oh what a joy it is to do good noiselessly and unseen! How happy we are to be the invisible messengers of God's goodness to men!"

The angel of Death looked at him sadly. "Alas!" said he, "I wish I could rejoice like thee in the praises and thanks of men; but they know me not. They call me their enemy, they call me the disturber of their pleasures, the destroyer of their lives." And a big tear stood in his dark eye.

"Oh, brother," replied the angel of Sleep, "will not the good man, at his last waking, recognise with praises and thanks that thou wert his best friend? Are we not brothers, and the messengers of the same God?"

Then the angel of Death dried the tear in his eye, and both took their flight to go and fulfil their mission throughout the earth.

G. E. B.

Character Lessons.

FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES.

By George H. Young.

LESSON V.

OCCUPATION.

"Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do."

Isaac Watts.

Walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.—*Eph.* iv. 1.

"All is the gift of industry; whate'er exalts, embellishes, and renders life delightful."

1. Is it well to have an occupation?
2. Why?

Because to keep busy is good for body and mind.

3. How does it add to happiness?
4. Why is a vocation helpful to self-culture?
5. Why ought all to assist in the world's work?

Because all owe it to themselves and the world.

6. What effect has idleness?
7. Is honest labour ever degrading?
8. Is it desirable that work have no place in the world?
9. Why is it well for everybody to have a regular trade?
10. How does a constant occupation aid our development?
11. What lesson do you get from the great writers like Dickens, or the artists like Raphael, who have devoted themselves to a single occupation?
12. Why is it so nearly impossible for men to be great in more than one direction?
13. What do you think of the statement of Joshua Reynolds that a man could not be a good painter and also a good talker?
14. What is the difference in being simply constantly busy, and in having a vocation or trade?
15. How does a vocation aid in developing character?
16. Does the possession of wealth make it unimportant that one be practically acquainted with some special trade?

17. Who among your acquaintances have vocations that you most admire?

QUOTE Eccl. ix. 10.

TO THE TEACHER.—Urge the need of putting effort into effect,—steady work. Show that people who have no vocation are likely to be indifferent, restless, and often useless. Combat the theory that any honest, needful labour is degrading; show that kitchen labour is as honourable as teaching, and that farming is as holy as preaching. Martha, with her much serving, is as needful as Mary sitting at the Lord's feet.

LESSON VI.

ORDER.

"We see it written in the boundless skies;
We read it on the earth;
The flowers display it with their starry eyes;
The seasons speak its worth."

SET IN ORDER THE THINGS THAT ARE TO BE SET IN ORDER.—*Ex.* xl. 4.

1. Do things in your home keep in place?
2. Why is it well to have order?
3. For what reason ought little folks to help in keeping things in place?
4. Ought you to do it?
5. Why?

Because I can make my mother's tasks easier in that way.

6. What if you get careless about these things?

Then I shall be unkind.

7. How will orderly habits aid you?

They will help me to learn how best to do all things as I grow older.

8. Does disorder tend to make those about you more patient and good-tempered, or otherwise?
9. Are you at fault in these things?
10. Can you suggest any ways in which you might improve regarding these things?
11. What effect does a love of order have on character?
12. What does orderliness do for a home?
13. What sort of a place to live in is a disorderly home?
14. Mention any acquaintances or people of whom you have read who were noted for orderly habits?
15. How does orderliness apply to things of the mind?
16. What helps can you suggest to orderly thinking?
17. What authors best exemplify well-ordered thought?
18. Why is it important to apply orderly habits to mental as well as material things?

QUOTE Job xxxiii. 5; Titus i. 5.

TO THE TEACHER.—Impress your pupils regarding the duty of having thought about putting away playthings, keeping things tidy in their rooms, having care for clothing, desks, thimbles, scissors, pencils, shoes, skates. Dwell on the fact that home happiness is enhanced in these ways, and that each one contributing makes it easier for all.

How the Minister's Time is Wasted.

In his book on "The Cure of Souls," a course of lectures addressed to students for the ministry, Dr. Watson (Ian Maclaren) waxes indignant and humorous over the frittering of the minister's time on trivialities. His account of a minister's working-week is most amusing, and we transcribe it for the benefit of our lay readers who may be inclined to think that the minister ought to be at everybody's beck and call at every hour of the day:—

Monday.—The Minister, exhausted by Sunday's work, faces a pile of letters, that has accumulated in the end of the week, with disgust and rebellion. They are on all kinds of subjects, from a schedule issued by some committee, voracious of statistics, to a note of charming irrelevancy from a lady about a cook that had once been in his congregation. Two hours of clerk's work for at least five days a week was not a part of his original programme, and it is that item which whitens men's hair. His note-book shows that an Ecclesiastical Court meets in the afternoon, and after a battle with his lower self, which leans to golf, he attends, in all the glow of mortal victory, to find its members engaged in persuading some poor congregation to give an extra five pounds to some fund, and afterwards throwing themselves into the discussion of a point of order with unaffected delight. In the evening he is due at a meeting which has now risen from a soiree to a conversazione, and is just bordering on a reception, where, finding six other neighbours, somebody exults in explaining the interesting circumstances in which he first met their esteemed pastor at a hydropathic.

Tuesday morning he spends at the local School Board, trying to discover under the rules how much an ex-pupil teacher ought to get as an assistant-mistress,

and whether a charge of 2s. 6d. expended by the caretaker on his coal-cellar can be charged against the rates. He does visit one or two sick that day, but is hampered by an afternoon tea, where he meets seven ladies, whose husbands, being business men, were not expected to come. In the evening he presides at the Young Men's Society, which can only be kept up by his watchful presence, and hears a paper on Julius Cæsar, on which he offers remarks hurriedly gathered from an encyclopædia, but suggestive of omniscience.

Wednesday morning is occupied in drawing up a report on the debt of a church for a board, and at three o'clock he moves a resolution at the annual meeting of the Society for the Reformation of Tramway Boys. He counts himself fortunate in saving two hours for the preparation of his address for the mid-week service.

Thursday opens well, and the minister begins to work for Sunday, when a visitor comes, and then a crowd—a young lady who is anxious to be a nurse; a young man (who was once at the young men's sermon) to get a testimonial for a situation; a member of the church with no business, who wished to introduce a country friend, the travelling secretary of some third-rate society, whose time is paid; an elderly person who got good from one of the minister's sermons in a strange church, and borrows five shillings. In the evening he takes the chair at the deacons' meeting, where the main features are the church officer's salary and a draught which is the alleged reason of the irregular attendance of two families.

On Friday that good angel, the minister's wife, comes to the rescue, and gives strict orders that no one shall be admitted. The outside world struggles on without apparent disaster, and the minister has the luxury of four hours' consecutive thought. If he had many forenoons like this he might become a preacher. He is, indeed, so intoxicated with study that he proposes to have a long evening with his books, when he recollects an engagement to meet the workers at Bethesda—a mission hall on unsectarian principles, which a member of his own church supports at the cost of £200 a year, and where he preaches to a select audience of seventy children and thirty adult pensioners. The minister wishes for the moment that he had refused to have anything to do with this mistaken form of Christian enterprise, and persuaded the good man to have aided a poor church with his liberality; but the minister has not more moral courage than other people, and he was afraid of being called unevangelical instead of sensible.

But Saturday! This will make up for all. Alas! his wife goes off guard, and a picturesque foreigner from the East takes possession of the study. The minister, courteous as one ought to be to distant strangers, lays himself out to extricate the visitor's meaning, and, after an hour's patient explorations, discovers that his caller comes from an unknown place, that he represents himself, that he wishes to build something, that he is determined to preach in the minister's church to-morrow for a collection. When the man from Mesopotamia has been induced to depart, it is in vain to take up the sermon till evening. So far as I know these details are not exaggerated, and they are given at length for a serious purpose. It is not to suggest that Christ's minister should hold himself aloof from the great charities or social causes which are the glory of national life, or be indifferent to the extension of God's kingdom or the work of foreign churches. No man is wearied or harassed by an enterprise of the first order. He is done to death by petty details, by useless talk, by religious faddists, by unnecessary correspondence.

The Turks and the Bible.

A correspondent sends us some particulars of an attempt being made in Constantinople to edit the Bible in the interests of Mussulman orthodoxy. The smaller fry of Turkish officialism are not content with confiscating Bibles wholesale, in defiance of the Imperial laws and treaties which guarantee the liberty of religious teaching. They have now undertaken to revise the Book, and to declare what portions must be struck out, before they sanction its free circulation in the Ottoman Empire. Their proceedings form the subject of a spirited representation, which Sir Clare Ford has just delivered to the Porte. Their attempt to edit the Scriptures is a new departure in folly, and its manifest absurdities seem already to have brought a blush to the cheek of the exalted persons with whom our Ambassador has been in communication. "Thy kingdom come" is not to stand without an assurance that it involves nothing derogatory to the rights of the Sultan. As this seems to imply an apprehension that his Majesty's own kingdom is going, it is quite enough to make him wish to be saved from his friends. All references to the Kingdom of Heaven are in fact looked upon with suspicion, and they are to be recast, or omitted. The Old Testament seems to give particular offence. Its many promises of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine seem nothing less than treasonable to the Turk, who holds the land. There is to be nothing about Jew or Hebrew, or about the Law of the Jews, for, in a political point of view, and the censor admits no other, the Law of the Jews of Palestine is but the law of their Turkish masters. An Old Testament with the Jewish law left out will be a miracle of editorial contrivance, but the Turks seem equal to the attempt. It is particularly stupid on their part, for their success would make a great breach in the law of the Koran, and so hoist the engineer of orthodoxy with his own petard. In many respects, the Koran is not

much better than a crib from both Testaments, and especially from the Old. Mahomet borrowed at large from the Jews in precepts, customs, ordinances; and wherever he altered, it was usually only with a view of "going them one more" in miraculous assertion. His hatred of them dates only from their steady refusal to accept his version in lieu of their own. The Sunday School children in Turkey are not to hear anything about "the liberty of the Gospel" lest it should be made to bear a personal allusion to the liberty of the Empire. As there is no liberty in the Empire worth talking about, there need be little alarm on this point. "The Empire, first and last, and all the time," seems to be the motto of the official with the scissors. He will hear of nothing that conflicts with the interests of the Unspeakable of the Ottoman variety. Perhaps he is wise in his generation, for the book he attacks has delivered many a deadly blow at Islam, throughout history. He would, however, do well to reflect that its worst assault will prove to be yet in store, in the improbable event of his being allowed to continue this wretched piece of work.

Abdallah and the Fly.

It was the third hour of the day, and Abdallah still lingered over the morning repast, when there came a little fly and alighted on the rim of his goblet. It sipped a particle of syrup and was gone. It came next morning, and the next, and the next again, till it caught the eye of the scholar. As he considered it, and as it gave forth its many colours, and moved itself aright, it seemed beautiful exceedingly, and in his heart he could not find to drive it away. Wherefore it came day by day continually, and, waxing bolder and bolder, it withal became greater and greater, till in the size as of a locust could be perceived as the likeness of a man; and the greater that it grew the more winning were its way, frisking like a sunbeam, singing like a peri, so that the eyes of the simple one were blinded, and in all this he did not perceive the subtlety of an evil jinn. Wherefore, waxing bolder and yet bolder, whatsoever of dainty meats its soul desired, the lying spirit freely took; and when, waxing wroth, the son of the prophet said, "This is my daily portion from the table of the mufti; there is not enough for thee and me;" playing one of its pleasant tricks, the brazen-faced deceiver caused the simple one to smile, until in process of time the scholar perceived that as his guest waxed stronger and stronger, he himself waxed weaker and weaker.

Now also there arose frequent contention between the demon and his dupe, and the youth smote the demon so sore that it departed for a season. Thereupon, Abdallah rejoiced exceedingly, and said, "I have triumphed over mine enemy, and when it seemeth good in my sight I shall smite him that he die." But after not many days, lo! and behold, the jinn came again, arrayed in goodly garments, and bringing a present in its hand; and, with its fair speech, saying, "Is it not a little one?" it enticed this silly dove so that he again received it into his chamber.

On the morrow, when Abdallah came not into the assembly of studious youth, the mufti said, "Wherefore tarrieth the son of the faithful? perchance he sleepeth." Therefore they resorted even to his chamber, and knocked, and lifted up their voice; but as he made no answer, the mufti opened the door, and behold! on the divan lay the dead body of his disciple. His visage was black and swollen, and on his throat was the pressure of a finger broader than the palm of a mighty man. All the stuff belonging to the hapless one was gone, the gold and the jewels, and the parchment-rolls, and the changes of raiment; and in the soft earth of the garden were discerned the footsteps of a giant. The mufti measured one of the prints, and lo! it was six cubits long.

What means the apologue? Who can expound the riddle? Is it the bottle or the betting-book? Is it the billiard table? Is it the theatre, or the tea-garden, or the music-saloon? Is it laziness? Is it debt? Is it the wasted Sunday? But know that an evil habit is an elf constantly expanding. It may come in at the key-hole, but it will soon grow too big for the house.

* * * *

Beware of the bad habit. It makes its first appearance as a tiny fay, and is so innocent, so playful, so minute, that none save a precisian would denounce it, and it seems hardly worth

while to whisk it away. The trick is a good joke, the lie is white, the glass is harmless, the theft is only a few apples from the farmer's orchard, the bet is only sixpence, the debt is only half-a-crown. But the tiny fay is capable of becoming a tremendous giant; and if you connive and harbour him, he will nourish himself at your expense, and then, springing on you as an armed man, will drag you down to destruction.

Ruskin Mania.

Much harm has been—nay, is being done to great men's memories by too zealous devotees. This is an age of literary hero-worship; and with no one has hero-worship been carried to such an extent as with John Ruskin. Every word of the "Master" has at times been quoted as that of an inspired prophet. Yet few writers are so little able as he to bear the strain of literal interpretation. The student of Ruskin, whatever his other abilities, must have an understanding and sympathy above the average man. He must "possess his soul in peace." And, above all things, he must be endowed with a saving sense of humour. Unfortunately, it is from seriously minded people that the greater number of earnest disciples come. It must be always so. But—you cannot always take Ruskin seriously; and this is the great reason why Ruskin mania is so prevalent. It were hardly too much to say that comparatively few worshippers at the Ruskin shrine are in possession of their senses; of some, it is hard indeed to imagine that they "once were men." Mr. Ruskin, then, is rarely to be taken "au pied de la lettre"; and a man should look very carefully to his sanity before he thinks of becoming a Ruskinian. Prigs, it is said, are animals "who are overfed for their size." And a Ruskinian prig is very little better than others of his class. But prigs are not the only evils that result from Ruskin mania. Mr. Ruskin himself, in his prime, must have known as well as anybody that his writings were not "milk for babes," but required a seeing eye, a discerning ear.

A young couple, ardent Ruskinians both, and burning with a divine rage against usury and luxury, once determined to carry into practice Mr. Ruskin's extremist views on the virtues of plain living (by others). They deduced from the pages of "Fors Clavigera" and elsewhere the theory that no man shall enjoy what he does not at least help to produce. The husband left a lucrative clerkship in a large town; he and his wife, with one accord, went to live on a farm of a few acres in the heart of the country, where they agreed not only to do the entire outdoor work themselves, but to make their own clothes, churn, milk, and use no hired work of whatever kind. Their labour, they thought, would surely suffice to keep body and soul together; besides, was it not so written in the Book of the Prophet Ruskin? Even the buying of linen was wrong, according to this strictest sect of Ruskinianism; so the wife, who was a dainty, refined Englishwoman, obtained a spinning-wheel and spun the material for her own aprons and her husband's shirts. Coarse and rough they were, indeed, but what bliss to their owners to feel that no hireling's hand, no sweated labour, had ever had part or lot in their production! Early and late the pair worked—she driving cows to pasture, he tilling the bleak soil. Friends came to see them, to wonder, to implore; they could not understand how any woman, formerly fastidious and daintily dressed, could now wear shapeless working garments of her own make, or endure the rough and blackened hands which, among her many duties, she had not (poor thing!) found time sufficiently to wash.

But is Mr. Ruskin really to be held responsible for his disciples' vagaries! Surely, at that rate, no man would be found so misguided as to publish one line of his teaching! Mr. Ruskin himself—egoist, as some people have chosen to call him—had never any wish to be the fashionable idol of a worshipping crowd. "No true disciple of mine," he says somewhere, "will ever be a Ruskinian;" and still less, we may add, a Ruskin-maniac.

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BY

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THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

To-day and To-morrow.

If Fortune, with a smiling face,
Strew roses on our way,
When shall we stoop to pick them up?—
To-day, my friend, to-day.
But should she frown with face of care,
And talk of coming sorrow,
When shall we grieve, if grieve we must?—
To-morrow, friend, to-morrow.

If those who have wronged us own their fault,
And kindly pity pray,
When shall we listen and forgive?—
To-day, my friend, to-day.
But if stern justice urge rebuke,
And warmth from memory borrow,
When shall we chide, if chide we dare?—
To-morrow, friend, to-morrow.

If those to whom we owe a debt
Are harmed unless we pay,
When shall we struggle to be just?—
To-day, my friend, to-day.
But if our debtor fail our hope,
And plead his ruin thorough,
When shall we weigh his breach of faith?—
To-morrow, friend, to morrow.

For virtuous acts and harmless joys
The minutes will not stay;—
We have always time to welcome them
To-day, my friend, to-day.
But care, resentment, angry words,
And unavailing sorrow,
Come far too soon, if they appear
To-morrow, friend, to-morrow.

A Noble Action Rewarded.

A terrible storm is sweeping along the coast of Devonshire. The Teignmouth life-boat is preparing to make its way to a foreign vessel which, at some short distance from the land, is showing signs of dire distress.

The life-boat crew is complete, with the exception of one man. Young Ned Carey, a Teignmouth fisher lad and an expert sailor, is offering to fill the vacant place. But first he bends down gently to a woman who stands beside him, and says to her in a clear, brave voice, "Mother, you will let me go?"

The mother had been a widow only six months. Her husband was a fisherman. He put out one bright day in spring for the last time in a fishing-boat upon a calm sea. A sudden squall came on; broken fragments of the boat were seen next morning, but the fisherman returned no more.

A fierce refusal rises to the woman's lips. But her sad eyes move slowly towards the distressed vessel. She thinks of the many loved lives in danger within it, and of many distant homes in peril of bereavement. She turns to her boy, and in a voice calm and courageous as his own, "Go, my son," said she, "and may God bring you safe back to your mother's heart."

Hurriedly she leaves the beach, and seeks her desolate home; and alone she thinks of her old sorrow and of her new fear.

Morning dawns again. The storm has spent itself. The waves are tossing their heads, but the worst fury of the sea is over. A fine vessel has gone down upon the waters, but the Teignmouth life-boat has nobly fulfilled its noble task, and all hands on board the vessel have been saved.

Why does Ned Carey linger in hesitation outside his mother's door? He has shown himself the bravest of the brave throughout the night. Why does he shrink from the proud welcome that awaits him from the heart nearest to his own.

Beside him stands a tall worn man; a man whom he has rescued from a watery grave; a man whose eyes, full of tenderness, never leave his own. Around the two throng Teignmouth villagers. Many hands are thrust towards the man in happy recognition. "Who will dare to tell her?" So speaks a voice well-nigh choked with emotion. "I will!" and Ned Carey in another moment is in his mother's arms.

"Mother listen. I have a tale for your ears. One of the men saved last night is a Teignmouth fisherman. A fearful storm had overtaken him upon the sea several months ago. He was observed and saved by a foreign vessel. The vessel was outward bound. Away from home, from wife, from friends, the man was forced to sail. By his wife and friends he was mourned as dead.

"He arrived at the vessel's destined port only to set sail again with the first ship bound for England. Last night he found himself within sight of home; but a storm was raging on sea and land, and once more the man stood face to face with a terrible death. Help came in his need. Mother, try to bear the happy truth.

"When your brave heart—a heart which in the midst of its own sorrow could feel for the sorrows of others, sent me forth last night, you knew not—how should you know?—that you sent me to the rescue of my dear father's life." Not another word is spoken. A step is heard; the rescued man stands by his own fireside. With a cry of wild joy the mother rushes forward and falls into his arms.

Very Human.

A little three-year old girl likes very much to go to church, and especially enjoys the singing. One day the choir sang "Rock of Ages, cleft for me;" and after she got home the little one was heard singing, very seriously, "Rock the babies, kept for me."

A little girl who had mastered her catechism confessed herself disappointed, "because," she said, "though I obey the fifth commandment and honour my papa and mamma, yet *my days are not a bit longer in the land, because I am put to bed at seven o'clock.*